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REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.5/48/L.6

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rule of procedure of the General Assembly

A. Request contained in the draft resolution

1. Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.5/48/L.6, under section III it would:

(a) Decide to study the possibility of the establishment of a new jurisdictional and procedural mechanism or of the extension of mandates and improvement of the functioning of existing jurisdictional and procedural mechanisms;

(b) Decide also to establish an ad hoc intergovernmental working group of experts in the legal and financial fields, which would work in consultation with the relevant existing bodies and would submit to the General Assembly a report with specific recommendations no later than its forty-ninth session;

(c) Further decide that the group would consist of 25 members and invite the President of the General Assembly to define the composition of the Working Group with due regard for equitable representation and to convene it as soon as possible and no later than 31 March 1994;

(d) Request the Secretary-General to provide the group with the necessary services;

(e) Further request the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States on the issues identified in paragraph 1 (a) above, and to bring these views to the attention of the ad hoc intergovernmental working group of experts as well as to the attention of the General Assembly;

(f) Invite Member States to make voluntary contributions to fund the activities of the above-mentioned working group.

B. Activities by which the proposed requests would be implemented

2. Should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution:

(a) A working group of experts, consisting of 25 members, would be convened by the President of the General Assembly as provided for in paragraph 1 (c) above prior to the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. While the group would have to determine the frequency with which it would have to meet, it is assumed for the purpose of estimating the cost of implementing the draft resolution that it would meet three times in 1994 in New York, for a duration on each occasion of five working days, to study the possibility of the establishment of a new jurisdictional and procedural mechanism or of the extension of mandates and improvement of the functioning of existing jurisdictional and procedural mechanisms. There would be one meeting in the morning and one meeting in the afternoon with interpretation and documentation for the meetings of the working group to be provided in all six languages of the General Assembly. It is anticipated that approximately 50 pages each of pre-session, in-session and post-session documentation would be required. Travel and subsistence would be provided to the experts from the regular budget of the United Nations;

(b) Prior to the first meeting of the working group, the following activities would need to be undertaken:

(i) Formulation of a questionnaire and its circulation to all Member States on the feasibility, operational and procedural arrangements of the proposed new mechanism;

(ii) Preparation of a series of reports for the meeting in March 1994 of the working group of experts. Such reports would include an analysis of the responses from Member States to the questionnaire; an analysis of the mandates and functioning of the existing jurisdictional and procedural mechanisms of the United Nations, including the Administrative Tribunal and the internal mechanisms established under article X of the Staff Regulations and Rules; as well as a review of the administrative and financial procedures deriving from the Financial Regulations and the Staff Regulations of the United Nations as they pertain to this subject;

(c) The Secretary-General would provide substantive and technical servicing of the working group and prepare, between sessions, such further documentation as required by the working group;

(d) The Secretary-General would establish a trust fund for this activity and invite Member States to make voluntary contributions. To the extent that such contributions were forthcoming, requirements under the regular budget would be reduced and resultant savings would be reflected in the budget performance report.

3. The implementation of the request contained in section III of the draft resolution would require substantive and technical servicing of the meetings of the working group of experts prior to and during its meetings. Based on the assumptions made above, the estimated total cost for servicing these meetings are indicated below:

(a) Travel and subsistence of 25 experts ($422,700);

(b) Supplementary staff resources (general temporary assistance equivalent to nine work-months for one D-1, one P-5, one P-3 and two General Service (Other level) and overtime) ($381,100) to undertake the activities enumerated in paragraph 2 (b) (i) and (ii) above and to provide support to the working group. In addition, it is estimated that $134,800 would be required under section 28 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 1/ (Staff assessment), to be offset by the same amount under income section 1 (Income from staff assessment).

C. Potential for absorption

4. The resources requested under section 25E include provision not only for meetings already in the calendar of conferences, but also for meetings to be added later by decisions of the General Assembly, based on the pattern of such meetings in the past. Accordingly, it is anticipated that the provision of conference services for the meeting of the working group of experts, including the provision of documentation and interpretation in all six official languages of the General Assembly, would be made from within resources programmed under section 25E, Office of Conference Services, of the proposed programme budget. Thus, no additional requirements for conference servicing would arise.

5. No provisions have been made in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 to cover substantive and technical secretariat servicing of the meetings called for by the draft resolution. Therefore, it is not anticipated that the related cost of $803,800 could be absorbed from within the provisions under this section of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995.

D. Indication of additional requirements

6. Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.5/48/L.6, it is estimated that additional requirements would arise in respect of requests contained in section III. These would include:

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General temporary assistance	321 100
Overtime	60 000
Travel of representatives	422 700
	803 800

It is proposed to include this provision under section 25A (Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management).

E. Contingency fund

7. It will be recalled that, under the procedure established by the General Assembly in its resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986, a contingency fund is established each biennium to accommodate additional expenditures derived from the legislative mandates not provided for in the proposed programme budget. Under the same procedure, if additional expenditures are proposed that exceed resources available from the contingency fund, these activities can be implemented only through redeployment of resources available from low-priority areas or modification of existing activities. Otherwise, such additional activities will have to be deferred until a later biennium. A consolidated statement of all programme budget implications and revised estimates will be submitted to the General Assembly towards the end of the current session.

8. Should it not prove possible to meet the costs from the contingency fund, the implementation of the draft resolution would have to be effected either through termination, deferral, curtailment or modification of some activities related to legal activities, financial management and control and staff administration and training in the relevant programmes and sections of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995.

F. Summary

9. Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.5/48/L.6, it is estimated that an additional appropriation of $803,800 would be required under section 25A of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 for the servicing of the working group of 25 experts. Furthermore, an amount of $134,800 would be required under section 28 (Staff assessment), to be offset by the same amount under income section 1 (Income from staff assessment).

Notes

1/ A/48/6.